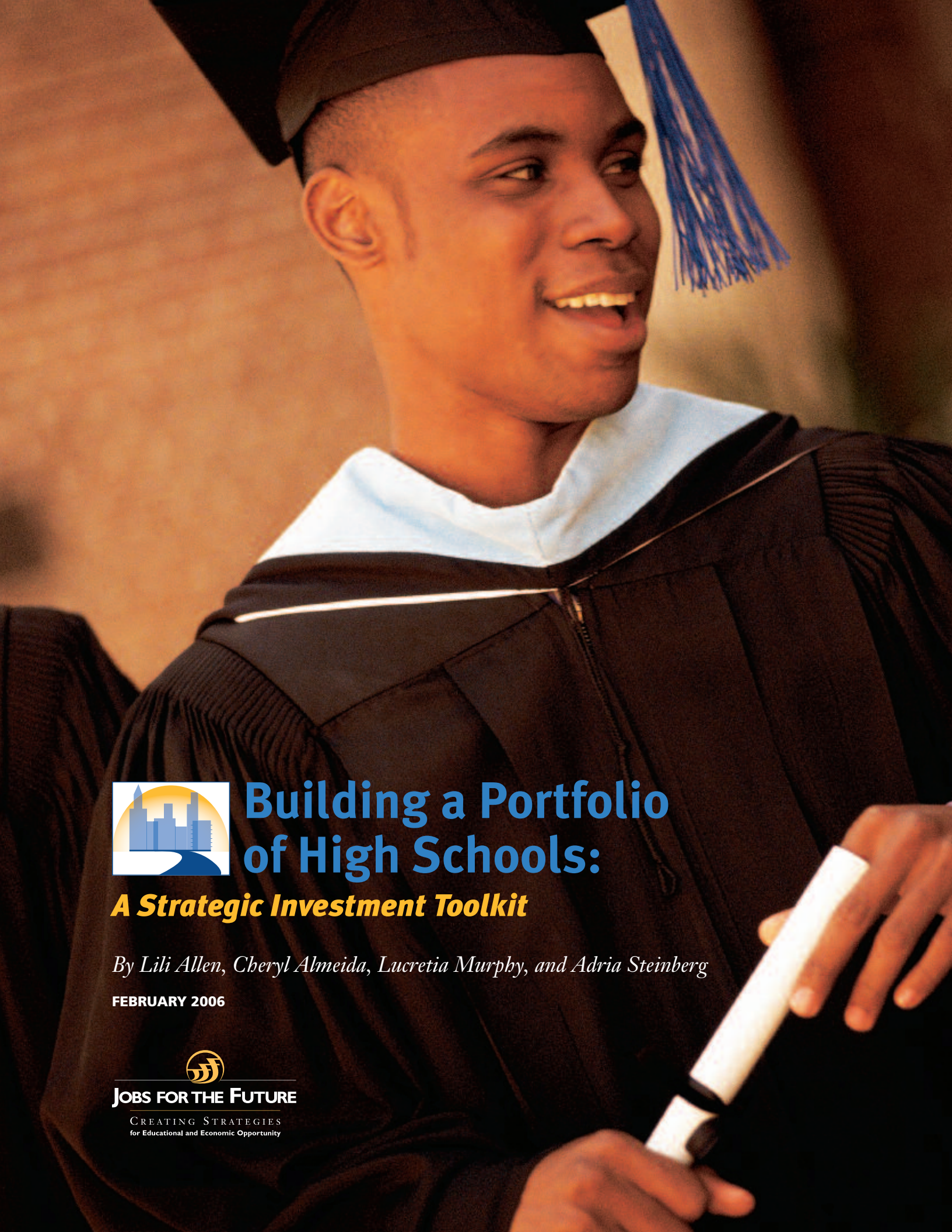

Building a Portfolio of High Schools:

A Strategic Investment Toolkit

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction: Tooling Up for the Change

This toolkit provides a road map for district leaders, education professionals, and community stakeholders to move from large, comprehensive high schools to a portfolio of smaller learning environments. For all of these groups, success in this new educational landscape requires moving beyond business as usual, asking new questions, and developing new ideas and skills. The challenges of managing and governing a system of small high schools with multiple providers and partners include, for example, such knotty issues as when to provide the same programming features for all students and when to customize to particular a population; or how a diverse system can apportion resources fairly, assess and support quality, and ensure equity of results.

Although policymakers and practitioners have always been responsible for being strategic and prudent about educational investments, now more than ever it is critical to base decisions on a careful assessment of the best leverage points within a complex system of policies, programs, and people, and to gather and use the best evidence available. The tools presented on the following pages are designed to help those on the frontlines of change in our high schools to hold challenging conversations and think through trade-offs and dilemmas as they make critical and strategic decisions.

CONTEXT

For generations, Americans have known what to expect from their high schools. Teenagers in cities across the United States, like their parents and grandparents before them, could expect to go to a large high school with as many as three or four thousand of their peers. They could anticipate a day segmented into 45 minute blocks, each devoted to a different subject, and a year punctuated by predictable rituals from the annual Thanksgiving day football game with the arch-rival school to the periodic honor roll assembly. They could expect to hear at graduation the names of those going on to college and those receiving special scholarships and honors. The rest (many not unhappily) saw high school as the end of their formal education.

Today, in Boston, Oakland, New York, Chicago, and a number of other cities across the country, the experience of going to high school is changing radically. For young people and their parents, the "one-size-fits-all" assumption of the large, comprehensive high school is giving way to increased choice among a variety of schooling designs, some of which look quite different from the regularities and rituals of the past. Consider what has changed in Boston.

In 1999, students or parents who wanted something different from what was offered in Boston's 11 large comprehensive high schools or the citywide vocational high school had few options. They could try to get into one of the city's three selective exam schools. They could apply for the few slots available in one of the city's three small "Pilot" (district-approved charter) high schools or a handful of state-approved charter schools. Or they could risk stigma and marginalization by opting for an alternative school or program run by a community-based organization.

By the fall of 2005, Boston's educational landscape was substantially different: young people could choose among 19 small high schools (each with under 400 students), some free-standing, some sharing converted school buildings and all offering a college preparatory curriculum for all students. Most of these schools have a theme-linked identity—ranging from career-based themes such as the Engineering School to more conceptual themes such as the Social Justice Academy. Six of these are Pilot schools, with substantial autonomy to determine their own curriculum, instructional methodologies, schedule, and use of funds, and all of the small schools will have at least some of the

flexibilities of a Pilot school. In addition, there are seven charter high schools. The remaining comprehensive high schools (only five in number) are organized in grade 9-12 small learning communities, with some autonomy within the whole school structure.

In just a few short years, the landscape of high schooling in Boston and a number of cities has been redrawn—a development that is beginning to attract the attention of educational, community, and philanthropic leaders in urban areas throughout the country.

Why the Terrain is Shifting

Until recently, the traditional high school seemed inevitable and immutable, frustrating generations of reformers—both inside and outside the schools themselves—by its apparent impermeability. But the suddenly shifting ground in recent years indicates that there have long been fault lines beneath the surface.

Perhaps the major impetus to change is the growing realization that the promise of a high school that offers "something for everyone" is too often an empty one, especially for young people from low-income and minority backgrounds. Large high schools tend to be impersonal and bureaucratic places where absenteeism is high, anonymity reigns in the halls, and signed hall passes substitute for staff members who know students' names. While a small group of academically avid, athletically talented, and interpersonally astute students might thrive in such places, many young people get lost or "fall through the cracks." Those with resources may get tutors or enrichment opportunities outside of the school; those lacking resources are more likely to flounder through high school, perhaps leaving with a diploma—or, far too often, without. With or without a diploma, youth most likely leave school unprepared for postsecondary education or to gain employment with advancement potential.

While these trends are not new, they have become more evident with the city-by-city (and sometimes school-by-school) publication of low promotion and graduation rates and high failure rates on statewide assessments. The impact of such data has been magnified by a growing public awareness: in a world where at least some postsecondary education is a necessity, young people must leave high school prepared for college.

The Search for New Ways of Doing Business

In the face of such bad news, many educational and community leaders are asking how to turn things around. What needs to happen for high schools to become safe and supportive learning environments? What would help them become more intimate places where students spend time in class and out with teachers who know their names and are interested in how and what they think? And, most important, how can high school ensure that all young people leave prepared for success in postsecondary education and in an economy that requires higher-level skills than ever before?

Although promising something for everyone, large, traditional high schools tend to embody a narrow definition of intelligence, a limited repertoire of teaching methods, and, despite the changes in our economy, instruction and assessment designed to sort students into college bound and non-college bound tracks. Paradoxically, educators are realizing that helping all young people achieve a common result—the skills, knowledge, and personal qualities to succeed in postsecondary education—can best be achieved *not* through forcing everyone into a one-size-fits-all high school program, but through offering a variety of educational options, all of which feature the new three "R's": a **r**igorous college preparatory curriculum; strong and supportive **r**elationships with teachers and among peers; and a curriculum that is **r**elevant to hopes, dreams, and future success.

The communities on the frontlines of this work have begun to figure out what is involved in fostering and supporting an equitable portfolio of diverse, high-quality learning environments for all young people. First and foremost, they have realized that it is not something that a school district can or should do alone. Ensuring that every young person can find an appropriate and effective learning environment requires a broad set of partners and providers—organizations that can bring new ideas, skills, and, potentially, new resources to the table.

For example, some cities have engaged the services of school reform organizations or intermediaries with experience in the design and start-up of new small schools. Others are working closely with public care providers, such as the foster care and juvenile justice systems, to ensure better and more stable transitions for the young people exiting those systems and entering the new schools. Still others are working closely with mental health and social service providers to offer supports that will help young people and families for whom the barriers to learning extend far beyond the school walls.

This kind of collaboration and partnership opens new opportunities to create learning environments that can calibrate the right combination of pressure and support to suit the needs of the young people who enroll. And, as the portfolio of learning options grows, young people and their parents have expanded choice in selecting a learning environment that matches their dreams, interests, skills, and goals.

Using the Toolkit

The Toolkit's two chapters take district reform leaders and their partners through the process of planning a portfolio of excellent schools, thinking through the relationship of the district to potential partners who could become additional engines of reform, and developing strategies for actually launching and sustaining new schools for the developing portfolio. Each chapter begins with a brief introduction and synopsis of the tools therein. Reform leaders are invited to use, distribute, and adapt the tools in ways that best meet their immediate needs in this evolving body of work.

Chapter One: Developing the Engines of Reform provides tools that district reform leaders can use in choosing a strategy for designing and launching a portfolio of small schools. These tools help leaders think through the tough decisions. Who should control the change process: the district and school leadership, an outside agency or organization under a contract or charter arrangement, or a partnership of inside and outside players? Who will develop and then participate in the governance of these schools? What type of district-level infrastructure is needed to oversee the change process?

Chapter Two: Launching the Portfolio offers tools that reform leaders can use to support the development, launch, and sustainability of new schools. Selecting large high schools to convert to campuses of small schools and deciding on the pace of reform are key decisions addressed in the tools in this chapter. Other tools in Chapter 2 help reformers determine which schools are showing success and might be replicated, and what conditions the district needs to create to ensure the continued success of new small schools.

CHAPTER 1:

Developing the Engines of Reform

INTRODUCTION

The work of high school reform is more complex, and potentially more promising, than ever before. In particular, the introduction of a range of partners who are prepared to become significant actors in shaping a district's reform agenda opens up both an opportunity and a challenge for districts. Efforts to develop a portfolio of effective high schools are more likely to gain traction if districts make smart decisions about which organizations to engage and how to engage them.

One of the first decisions reform leaders need to make is about the types of partnerships the district might forge in developing small schools and/or converting large schools to small ones. As districts begin to consider the changes in both policy and in central-office practice that must be made to support a more diverse and effective array of school options, how can outside partner organizations be deployed to promote necessary reforms? What role might community organizations play in advocating for changes that are likely to be resisted within the school system itself? What role might the teachers union play in up-front planning to ensure that teachers are engaged and supported in the reform effort?

Should a district collaborate with one of the new school development organizations that are marketing specific designs for replication around the country, engage with local community organizations to co-design schools, or undertake some combination of these? Can a local school reform organization play a central role in building the capacity of new schools, and if so, which specific supports are they best suited to provide? How does local context—union contracts, relationships between the central office and school staff, and relationships within schools themselves—shape these decisions?

Regardless of which strategy a district selects regarding the start-up and development of new small schools, scale-up requires a central authority to manage the process of new school development, coordinate the involvement of the central office bureaucracy as well as community partners, attend to and promote needed policy changes, and support small schools in their planning and start-up stages. Considering that a district is likely to be using a range of strategies to "get to small," what functions should this office be set up to undertake, and how would a district ensure the staff have the capacity to do the work?

The set of tools in this chapter explore these early-stage questions regarding governance of and support for new small schools. They help reform leaders think about the trade-offs of internal and external engines of reform and also provide guidance in how to contract with outside organizations, work with outside partners, develop capacity for reform within central office, and use outside allies to help shape and move policy changes that support the new directions.

NOTES ON THE TOOLS

TOOL 1.1:

Trade-Offs to Consider in Selecting a Strategy: Partnership Options

As a district begins to consider launching new small schools, it faces a range of choices regarding the use of outside organizations as partners in design, support, and governance of schools. This tool describes four options for proceeding with a small school development initiative and considers the implications of each option for collective bargaining, relationships within the building, community relations, resources, and the work of the district and partners to build the capacity of new schools.

TOOL 1.2:

Contracting with a School Development Organization to Design and Operate Schools

A host of school development organizations are replicating particular school designs. Some are centrally managed by a charter management organization or other intermediary, while others are loosely affiliated with a network of similar schools. This tool lays out a set of questions a district would want to answer before contracting school development to an outside organization.

TOOL 1.3:

Using "Intermediaries" to Start and Support New Small Schools

Increasingly, districts interested in starting new schools are partnering with school reform organizations. This tool helps a district and its partners to consider their capacity to undertake the core functions of a reform effort and determine which functions should be kept "in-house" and which might be "outsourced" to another organization.

TOOL 1.4:

Investing in a District Office of Reform

In launching and managing a portfolio of high schools, districts need an internal capacity to lead and support this reform. This tool outlines the range of functions of a district office for high school reform and allows a district team to consider the indicators that would ensure that its office has the capacity to carry out the necessary functions.

TOOL 1.5:

Marshalling Support Around Key Policy/System Targets

A district reform team can use this tool to determine what "just in time" policy and systemic changes to address to support the goals of reform and what stakeholders might be engaged to address potential roadblocks.

TOOL 1.1:

Trade-Offs to Consider in Selecting a Strategy: *Partnership Options*

When a district launches a high school reform initiative, it can either act alone or take advantage of independent institutions—such as community organizations, school reform organizations (or "intermediaries"), or school development organizations—replicating specific school designs. These partner organizations can infuse new ideas into school designs, govern or participate in co-governance to ensure parent/community voice, play a central role in teaching and student support, and hold the district accountable for following through on its commitment to better schools. This tool describes four options districts are using in creating new schools—ranging from acting alone to partnering with various outside organizations. A district may opt for one approach or forge a range of partnerships for its small school development effort.

INSIDE OPTION: *District-Designed and Implemented*

Traditionally, school districts have driven reforms from the central office. In developing a portfolio of high schools, some districts have initiated design teams, mitigating the top-down nature of the reform by engaging a broader constituency in the work. A design team launched by the district often consists of representatives of the range of stakeholders in school redesign, such as parents, teachers, administrators, students, community partners, and central-office staff. The district might call for volunteers from stakeholder groups both within and outside the targeted school building, or it might hand-pick design team participants. The resulting school is operated solely by the district.

OUTSIDE OPTION: *Design and Implementation via Charter or Contract*

Through charter or contract, a district may use an outside entity, such as a community-based organization or a national organization replicating a specific school design, to design and operate one or more district schools. The outside organization undertakes all aspects of school design and implementation, including staff hiring and curriculum development. It is accountable to either the state or the school district for student outcomes.

DISTRICT/INTERMEDIARY PARTNERSHIP OPTION: *District and School Reform Organization Share Design and Implementation*

Many cities have partnered with a school reform organization—or "intermediary"—to co-plan and assist in implementing new schools. BayCES in Oakland, New Visions for Public Schools in New York City, and the Center for Collaborative Education in Boston—most often with private foundation dollars—have partnered with their local school districts to co-design an RFP for new small schools and coach design teams and new school staff in the development of a new school.

SCHOOL/COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP OPTION: *District and Community Organizations Share Design and Implementation*

A district, acting alone or with a school reform organization, may invite local community organizations to partner with school staff, parents, and students in response to an RFP for new school design. The extent to which this approach puts more control in the hands of the community organization depends on how the RFP is written. In many communities, design teams responding to an RFP must identify one lead community partner, although a lead partner does not preclude the involvement of multiple community organizations. In New York City, the community partner acts as the fiscal agent for foundation funding, which gives the community organization more influence in school design and governance—although the school remains a district school.

This tool identifies five key trade-offs to consider in determining which of the above strategies—or which ones in what combination—make the most sense for your district to pursue in launching new small schools. To complete this tool, the team involved in your high school reform effort should review the four options described above, and then assess the conditions in your community in relation to each of the issues in the left hand column below.

INSIDE OPTION: ***District-Designed and Implemented***			
Trade-Off to Consider	**Advantages**	**Drawbacks**	**Assessment: In our community...**
Relationships Within Building	Engages staff and students in building	Depending on relations between school-based staff and central office, participants in a district-initiated design team may be viewed with suspicion by other staff because the team is district-initiated	
Community Relations	Can build on the district's current community engagement strategies/ partnerships	May be viewed with suspicion by some community partners because district-initiated	
Capacity-Building	District roll-out, so can more readily address logistical/ start-up issues	Staff in building may feel disempowered and not open to professional development	
Resources	District can use existing resources (e.g., district staff) to lead the effort	District staff may not have time/expertise to devote to effort and quality of design may be compromised; requires additional resources to engage teachers/others	
Labor Impact and Relations	Can engage faculty on design teams to address staff roles and working conditions	Reforms can be constrained by existing contracts; negotiations to create more autonomy might fail	

OUTSIDE STRATEGY: *Design and Implementation via Charter or Contract*			
Trade-Off to Consider	**Advantages**	**Drawbacks**	**Assessment: In our community...**
Relationships Within Building	"Clean slate" for staff and student relations	Potential for mistrust of effort because outside organization drives the process	
Community Relations	Can be opportunity for significant role for community partner	Requires articulated strategy to engage multiple community partners; may be viewed with distrust by parents/others	
Capacity-Building	Can be opportunity to engage outside partner with specific school development capacity	Details of partnership between district and contracting organization must be specified	
Resources	Outside organization may have dollars to replicate a school model; district may save money by contracting out	District may have to front-load dollars to pay contracting organization if using state pass-through dollars because state reimbursement usually delayed by one year	
Labor Impact and Relations	Reforms can move forward quickly without constraints of any existing contracts or negotiations	Can be politically contentious; lost opportunity to engage union leaders in rethinking staff roles and other contractual implications of reform	

DISTRICT/INTERMEDIARY PARTNERSHIP OPTION: *District and School Reform Organization Share Design and Implementation*			
Trade-Off to Consider	**Advantages**	**Drawbacks**	**Assessment: In our community...**
Relationships Within Building	Coaches from school reform organization may be a neutral voice between central office and school staff	School reform organization may be perceived to have mission and values that run counter to those of school staff	
Community Relations	School reform organization may have capacity to broker relationships with community and parents	School reform organization may lack capacity to broker relationships with community and parents	
Capacity-Building	School reform organization brings expertise in building capacity for reforms at school level	Staff in building may resist professional development by a school reform organization they did not select	
Resources	Outside partner may already be funded or well-positioned to raise funds for start-up costs (e.g., planning, "retooling")	If private funds flow through outside partner, can complicate oversight of design/early implementation process	
Labor Impact and Relations	Leaders of school reform organization may bring new ideas that shift labor-management dynamics	School reform organization may not have amicable relationship with union	

SCHOOL/COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP OPTION: *District and Community Organizations Share Design and Implementation*			
Trade-Off to Consider	**Advantages**	**Drawbacks**	**Assessment: In our community...**
Relationships Within Building	Brings additional supports and opportunities to students, beyond what schools alone can provide	May be difficult for a community organization to avoid being marginalized by the school staff	
Community Relations	Engages and leverages expertise of community partners	Community organizations may not have the capacity to play a central role in school development	
Capacity-Building	Community partner may bring strengths/skills that expand the school's capacity to serve young people	School/community partnerships may require additional support to build collaboration and clarify roles in planning/ implementation	
Resources	Funders may be attracted to supporting more central role for community organizations in school design and implementation	Community organizations require stable outside dollars to support their role in school creation/ implementation; may already be strapped in raising dollars for core operations	
Labor Impact and Relations	Opens opportunity to engage community-based organizations in significant roles inside the building	Could be perceived as threatening union jobs	

TOOL 1.2

Contracting with a School Development Organization to Design and Operate Schools

This tool outlines the questions a district might want to consider when thinking through a potential contract with a school development organization to start new schools. In order to gather the information, a district can take several steps: conduct an interview with the potential contracting organization, review the organization's materials, and conduct interviews with other districts that have contracted with the organization.

PART I: BACKGROUND ON THE SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION

Educational Vision:

Is the organization promoting a specific school design or the development of a wide range of home-grown, diverse schools that broadly adhere to its design principles?

☐ Specific school design

☐ Wide range of diverse schools that broadly adhere to design principles

☐ No clear design or design principles

If you checked either of the first two boxes, describe specific design or design principles:

What student population(s) is it targeting to serve?

☐ Demographic group(s)

☐ Academic profile

☐ Other

Describe the student population(s):

Does the organization have a strategy for engaging college and community partners?

☐ Yes, it has an articulated strategy

☐ No, it does not have a strategy

If yes, describe the strategy:

Initial Evidence of Effectiveness

Does the organization have evidence (secondary research or its own organizational experience in school development) to support the school vision it's promoting?

☐ Yes, it has evidence

☐ No, it does not have evidence

If yes, describe the evidence:

What are the early findings around roll out of new schools by this organization?

Requirements for Effective Implementation

Has the organization identified core or essential requirements for implementing its school design?

☐ Identified most critical elements or "non-negotiable" features of its schools

☐ Identified operating requirements

☐ Has capacity to assist local sites in negotiating policy issues

District Requirements

Has the organization identified essential or "non-negotiable" capacities and enabling conditions that a partnering district must possess in order to successfully implement the model?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, what are those conditions?

☐ Autonomy over hiring school leader

☐ Autonomy over hiring school staff

☐ Autonomy over curriculum

☐ Autonomy over schedule/calendar

☐ Space requirements

☐ State or local policy that supports financing model

☐ Other (describe)

Services to Support School Development

Based on its theory of change, what services does the organization need to deliver to its selected schools to achieve its goals at each phase of the school development process?

☐ Pre-launch internships at existing school (for school leader/staff)

☐ Training for school leader

☐ Training for staff

☐ Curriculum materials

☐ Operational materials

☐ Convenings of schools in network

☐ On-site support

☐ Other (describe)

How will the organization deliver these services? What is the basic operational and financial plan for delivery of designated services?

Is the financial model for service delivery feasible within the current budget?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If not, has the organization identified a viable means to finance the services?

☐ Yes

☐ No

What core capacities are required to execute the operational plan?

☐ Staff expertise

☐ Organizational infrastructure

☐ Curriculum materials

☐ Other (describe)

What is the current organizational capacity to execute the plan? Organizational strengths and assets? Gaps?

Has the organization identified key services that its schools (or the district) are expected to secure and finance themselves?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, what services are the schools/district expected to secure/finance themselves?

What is the organization's plan for ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the site?

PART II: MAPPING AGAINST OUR NEEDS

Do the design and intended target population meet the needs of our district at this time?

Is our district prepared to meet the enabling conditions that we must possess in order to implement the model successfully?

TOOL 1.3

Using "Intermediaries" to Start and Support New Small Schools

Many districts have partnered with either a public education fund or school reform organization—or "intermediary"—to start and support new small schools. How does a district determine which outside organizations to engage, and how best to use them? This tool describes the partnership possibilities and provides a process for determining the most effective roles for a partnering intermediary that has school development and school support expertise. It can be used by a district reform team to determine what strategic actions would best be undertaken "in-house" by the district and which strategic actions should be "outsourced."

Directions: Consider the capacity of your district and your current intermediary organization (if relevant) and determine if there are any tasks that are critical to the district's agenda that neither entity has the capacity to fulfill. Then determine what other organization might be able to fulfill this task and identify possible funding streams to support that aspect of the work.

For example, a district and its intermediary organization may determine that there is no current capacity to meaningfully engage students in the process of new school development, and that a student organizing group might be best able to both educate students about the rationale for new school development and engage them in design teams. A district might reallocate current district dollars or grant funding to support this effort.

Task I: New School Development						
Role	**District capacity: Does it have the staffing? Infrastructure? Expertise?**	**Partnership organization capacity: Does it have the staffing? Infrastructure? Expertise?**	**Gap in capacity**	**Other organization(s) with capacity**	**Resources**	
					Available, via district/partner current funding	**Potential for new funding**
Co-develop RFP for new small schools and engage wide range of constituencies (teachers, students, administrators, parents, community-based organizations) to create small schools						
Spearhead new collaborations/new designs (e.g., early college high schools, schools designed with and co-governed by community organizations) • explore new designs • identify/address policy issues • provide coaching/support						
Advise on and broker school partnerships • identify community organizations, post-secondary institutions, and other outside groups that may partner in school design • engage partners in school redesign efforts						

Task II: Coaching/Professional Development for New School Leaders/Teachers						
Role	**District capacity: Does it have the staffing? Infrastructure? Expertise?**	**Partnership organization capacity: Does it have the staffing? Infrastructure? Expertise?**	**Gap in capacity**	**Other organization(s) with capacity**	**Resources**	
					Available, via district/partner current funding	**Potential for new funding**
Coach new small school leaders in school governance, instructional leadership, and engaging with community partners						
Coach design teams of teachers, students, parents, and other staff in the creation of new small schools						
Provide professional development for teachers in small schools on instruction, youth development/support						
Assist staff with ongoing brokering of school partnerships • identify and engage community organizations, postsecondary institutions, and other outside groups that may partner in school • assist school/partners to ensure central role for partners in life of school						
Coordinate a peer learning network of small schools staff (leaders, teachers) on topics related to governance, teaching and learning, and youth development						

TOOL 1.4

Investing in a District Office of Reform

The first chart outlines the range of functions of a district office for high school transformation. The second chart identifies the expertise and capacity needed to carry out the functions.

Directions: After reviewing the functions of a central office outlined in the first chart, use the second chart to assess the capacity of your designated high school reform office.

Functions of a Central Office for High School Transformation	
Creating, aligning, and revising the vision and strategic plan	• Create overall strategic plan for high school reform across all schools (spearhead determination of which schools will be targeted for specific instructional and structural reform initiatives and what district-wide initiatives will target all schools) • Advise on selection of large schools for conversion to autonomous small schools; outline and monitor steps in conversion work
Creating new schools	• Develop and oversee process for new school creation (engage district/school partners and/or school development organizations, design and disseminate RFP, develop/monitor contracts for partner involvement in schools, oversee selection of successful designs) • Develop strategy for transition from new school design to implementation (identify role of design team members in decisions about implementation; engage all school staff in transition from large comprehensive schools to autonomous small schools)
Brokering/ negotiating central office, state policy, and school sites	• Coordinate the work of central office departments to support high school reform agenda and new school development. • Remove policy barriers and create new policies and programs, especially regarding human resources, facilities, curriculum/instruction, and special programs (special needs, English language learners) • Ensure systemic integration of small schools and small learning communities' efforts so that expectations for high schools are coherent across schools • Ensure alignment of instructional/structural reforms so that instructional change agenda is promoted through structural reforms • Keep tabs on union issues that arise, engage union around ensuring both attention to working conditions and incentives for teacher engagement in high school reform work, and make recommendations for issues for contract negotiation • Monitor compliance with state/federal regulations; advocate for policy changes as necessary
Accountability of new small schools	• Work within central office to develop accountability measures for new small schools that incorporate multiple early-stage indicators (e.g., attendance, skill gains) along with other district accountability measures; develop criteria for rewards and sanctions • Partner with district leaders with line authority over high schools to implement accountability measures • Ensure that outcomes are shared with all stakeholders (e.g., parents, students, postsecondary partners, community members)
Support to sites	• Oversee coaching and professional development for new small school leaders and teachers • Coordinate involvement of partnering education reform organizations in provision of technical assistance to schools and in policy development/alignment
Access/equity	• Review and promote alignment of "second chance" options for students who have dropped out/stopped out to ensure equitable options for all students • Review policies or practices that result in disadvantage to particular groups within the system; design/implement policies to ensure all students have access to wide range of schools (e.g., program development across schools for specific populations, transportation policies) • Establish explicit criteria to govern school application/selection process to ensure equity

Expertise and Capacity Needed			
Areas of Expertise	**Specific Expertise and Capacity Needed**	**Indicators: Experience/expertise in...**	**Assessment**
Trust and Relationships with Key Stakeholders	Trust/relationships within central office bureaucracy	...managing initiatives across several central office departments	
	Trust of high school principals	...high school leadership, high school level program development and instruction/service delivery	
	Relationships with outside organizations	...managing external partnerships, engaging with community organizations around reforms	
	Support and protection of Superintendent	...managing district-wide efforts	
Operational Expertise	Vision and roll-out plan for institutionalizing high school reform efforts within central office departments	...working across several central office departments to implement new ways of operating in support of a reform agenda; managing change within multiple departments	
	Understanding of how to align structural and instructional reform agendas	...managing initiatives that align structural/instructional reforms and/or leading a school that aligns structure with instruction	
	Entrepreneurial energy and skills	...driving reforms within school department	
	Operational expertise at district and school level	...engaging central office departments in new service delivery models; experience/expertise in making operational changes at school level to support an initiative/student learning	
	Understanding of core capacity of partners and how to actualize	...engaging outside partners to meet instructional/reform goals of district	

TOOL 1.5

Marshaling Support Around Key Policy/System Targets

Directions: The first step is to identify policies and system practices that impede your efforts to realign resources to support a portfolio of schools that will be effective for all students. For each policy/systemic practice, consider who is invested in the status quo and who might be potential allies in advocating for reforms. Then specify what roadblocks might hinder your efforts. Finally, consider next steps to move forward with the necessary changes.

EXAMPLE:

Considerations	In our community...
Policy or system practice target	We need to improve our capacity to recruit, hire, and develop new small school leaders.
Who is invested in current policy/system practice	The human resources department would need to make significant changes to improve capacity in hiring new principals. Postsecondary institutions may have invested in professional programs for training new school leaders and may find it difficult to make changes.
Potential allies who might support an alternative policy or system practice	School reform organizations, community organizations, parents, the mayor, and business leaders might support more effective school leaders who are more aligned with our school reform goals. Teachers might be interested in more articulated pathways to school leader positions.
Potential roadblocks	Cost of streamlining hiring of new principals from inside/outside the district might be prohibitive.
Next steps	• Convene postsecondary institutions to determine their interest in partnering with district in effort to better prepare new principals • Engage senior staff and human resources department in reviewing current practices in hiring • Ask local school reform organization to research and report on the most promising school leader development programs from around the country

Considerations	Examples	In our community...
What key policies or systemic practices need to change to support a portfolio of high quality schools?	Promotion/graduation policies that impede options not organized around seat time/Carnegie units (e.g., options offering proficiency-based acceleration) Job descriptions that do not reflect priorities in new small schools Capacity-building in second-chance schools and programs that are currently under-resourced	
Who is invested in current policy/ system practice?	Teachers Principals Central office staff (which departments?) Community organizations Parents Mayor Business leaders School reform organizations Postsecondary institutions School committee	
What potential allies might support an alternative policy or system practice?	Teachers Principals Central office staff (which departments?) Community organizations Parents Mayor Business leaders School reform organizations Postsecondary institutions School committee	
What are the potential roadblocks?	Long-standing departmental procedures Budget issues Collective bargaining agreements What else?	
Next steps	Engage allies in reviewing data in support of an alternative policy or system practice Convene forums/hearings to share data and gain support Ask outside school reform organization to draft concept paper that describes and argues for potential policy/system practice change	

CHAPTER 2

Launching the Portfolio

INTRODUCTION

A district office charged with developing a more diverse portfolio of high schools, and its partners, quickly face a number of challenging strategic decisions. Reform leaders can use the tools in this chapter to be strategic in three critical areas: the conversion of large schools to small, the development of conditions that will enable new schools to fulfill their promise, and the replication of existing model schools or programs within the district.

Increasingly, districts are creating new schools within the walls of existing large school buildings. The decision to do so can be based on space considerations, concerns about existing failing high schools, or the economics of combining planned capital improvements to existing schools with new school development. While most large school conversions have targeted failing high schools, a district can consider a number of factors when choosing which schools to convert.

Another set of questions concerns how quickly to proceed in the conversion process, which one reformer has likened to peeling off a band-aid: whether done slowly or quickly, the process is painful. Nevertheless, leaders must make a decision about the pace of reform.

Whether creating small schools from the ground up or converting large schools to a campus of small ones, districts need to consider what policy conditions to put in place to ensure that its schools will succeed. Research indicates that granting schools flexibility over resources—with strong accountability mechanisms—is a critical step. In some districts, a network or subset of schools has negotiated particular flexibilities. In others, successful small schools gain the conditions through policy waivers, sidebar agreements with the union, or simply by "flying under the radar." As reform leaders expand the number of small schools within the district's portfolio, they need to consider all the avenues for creating the necessary conditions for success.

Finally, districts must determine whether there is a way to do more of "what works." This means looking carefully at existing small schools or model programs within its borders to see which have promising outcomes. If schools with promising outcomes are already in the portfolio, should they be replicated? To make strategic decisions around which, if any, schools to replicate, reform leaders have to assess whether the model itself is ready for replication and whether the district is ready to support such replication.

Ultimately, getting to scale in creating a portfolio of high schools will involve addressing such questions. This chapter includes tools to help leaders carry out a conversion strategy, provide new schools with the flexibilities they need, and replicate effective schools within the district.

NOTES ON THE TOOLS

TOOL 2.1:

Selecting Schools for a Conversion Strategy

In selecting a large, comprehensive high school for conversion to a multiplex of small schools, a district can take into account a number of factors: what is the performance of the district's large high schools, what are the district's current capital plans and what renovations would be required in current designs, which schools would garner community support for a conversion process, and which schools have a faculty that would embrace the conversion to small schools. This tool provides a framework for considering these factors in making decisions about conversion.

TOOL 2.2:

Trade-Offs to Consider in Selecting a Strategy: The Pace of Change

Once a district has selected a school for conversion, it must determine whether to accomplish the changes gradu-

ally, over a number of years, or at all once. The decision has implications for a number of factors, including the status of labor contracts, relationships within the building, community relations, and capacity-building efforts. This tool describes two approaches—incremental or "big bang"—and offers a way to assess the conditions in your community.

TOOL 2.3:

How "Flexibilities" Can Advance Teaching and Learning

Current research tells us that to thrive, small schools need at least a degree of flexibility to make school-based decisions regarding hiring, budget, governance, curriculum, and time. This tool is designed to help reform leaders think about how each of these potential areas of flexibility could be used to support teaching and learning.

TOOL 2.4:

Strategies for Extending Flexibilities to Small Schools

Reform leaders can use a number of different strategies to ensure that new schools have the flexibility they need: they can be innovative in their interpretation of existing district policy; seek a policy waiver for particular schools; create new policy; negotiate for flexibilities in the new union contract; or seek a waiver from union rules for new schools. This tool leads participants through the process of assessing the advantages and disadvantages of pursuing each of these strategies.

TOOL 2.5:

Identifying Potential Schools for Replication

In deciding whether to replicate existing successful schools, a key challenge for reform leaders is assessing which schools are effective with the population(s) of students most in need of options. This tool offers a framework of multiple measures for defining a school's student population and assessing its effectiveness based on student outcomes.

TOOL 2.6:

Assessing Suitability for Replication

Assessing the suitability of a school for replication within the district requires an analysis of several factors: whether the model design and implementation process are well defined; whether the model aligns with the district's reform strategy and enhances the offerings of the district's portfolio of schools; and whether it has the supports/assistance necessary for replication. This tool offers a set of criteria and accompanying benchmarks to help reform leaders assess whether a school is a strong candidate for replication within a district's portfolio of schools.

TOOL 2.1

Selecting Schools for a Conversion Strategy

Directions: Each of the four charts below addresses a specific factor to consider in selecting schools for conversion: performance, facilities, community engagement, and teacher capacity. To use this tool, an individual or team from the office of high school renewal first looks at available data and gathers additional information as needed to identify the likely candidates for conversion based on questions under each factor. Part of this task is to chart out the specific data used to identify the school for the high school reform team to consider.

Next, the district high school reform team considers the collected data to determine which school(s) might be targeted for conversion to small schools.

STEP 1: GATHERING INFORMATION ON SCHOOLS

Performance

Most districts begin conversion in persistently low-performing high schools. This approach is easiest to justify and likely to face the fewest political obstacles, as a range of stakeholders will likely have advocated for significant changes in low-performing schools.

Consideration	Which school(s)?	What data/information did you use to identify the schools? (provide specific data for each school)
Which schools consistently fail to hold onto, promote, and graduate students?		(e.g., dropout rates, retention rates)
Which schools are consistently underchosen by parents and students?		(e.g., student assignment data)
Which schools have been targeted by parents and community advocacy groups as unsafe and/or failing?		(e.g., information on organizing efforts)

Facilities

How extensive would the renovations need to be to create defined space for separate schools? A school may already be relatively well-configured for separate small schools, or a district may take the opportunity to implement planned upgrades in such a way that separate schools are feasible. For example, an upgrade might include putting science labs on several floors in one corner of the building; schools that are created on separate floors would each have their own designated science labs. A district should review the current space configuration of all high schools, along with the district's capital plan for slated renovations.

Consideration	Which school(s)?	What data/information did you use to identify the schools? (provide specific data for each school)
Which schools have existing architectural designs that support separate small schools?		(e.g., school has a central common area surrounded by clusters of classrooms)
Which schools are targeted for capital upgrades?		(e.g., school is in the queue for upgrades)

Community Engagement

Parents, community-based organizations, and postsecondary institutions can be important allies in the conversion of a school—or they can resist changes if they disagree with the district's assessment of their school. A district should consider which schools are most likely to garner community support in the conversion process.

Consideration	Which school(s)?	What data/information did you use to identify the schools? (provide specific data for each school)
Which schools are in a neighborhood that can be organized to support a transformation to a more personalized learning environment?		(e.g., active youth-focused and/or neighborhood associations)
Which schools have community and postsecondary partnerships that can be leveraged for student benefit more effectively through small schools?		(e.g., school/community partnerships that are intensive and sustained)
Which schools have a constituency that is likely to resist change to traditional school structures and rituals?		(e.g., alumni organization)

Teaching Staff

Faculty enthusiasm for teaching in a smaller, more personalized learning environment is critical to the success of new small schools. Some schools have professional cultures that help lay the groundwork for faculty collaboration in small schools. Other schools have a high degree of faculty dissatisfaction, and teaching staff may be less likely to support district-initiated changes. Determining which faculty is most likely to engage positively with the conversion involves considering a range of factors.

Consideration	Which school(s)?	What data/information did you use to identify the schools? (provide specific data for each school)
Which schools have a professional culture that supports faculty collaboration and student personalization?		(e.g., district leader and school coach reports on school culture and practices)
Which schools have a high degree of faculty dissatisfaction?		(e.g., large number of union grievances)
Which schools have a majority of teachers who are close to retirement (creating opportunities for new hires)?		(e.g., human resource reports on retirements)

STEP 2: COMING TO AGREEMENT

Record the school(s) that emerged for each factor. Then your district team can determine collectively which school(s) appear to be the most likely candidates from the perspective of performance, facilities, community engagement, and teaching staff, using the guiding questions following the chart.

Factor	Schools that were identified	Evidence
Performance		
Facilities		
Community Engagement		
Teaching Staff		

Which schools are identified under more than one factor?

How strong was the data used to identify these schools?

Does the collective data picture for these schools make them strongest candidates for conversion? Why/why not?

Do one or two factors override others and deserve priority in selecting schools?

Are there any schools for which the data is so compelling for one factor that they also should be considered in making the final decisions for which schools to convert?

TOOL 2.2

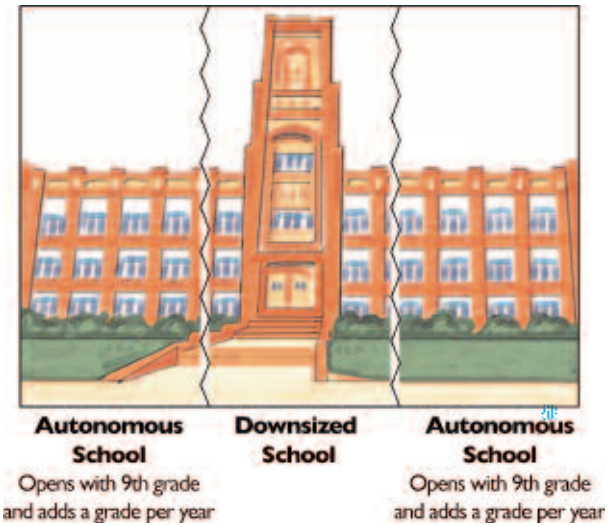
Trade-Offs to Consider in Selecting a Strategy: The Pace of Change

This tool describes two approaches to the pace of change to small schools in a building: incremental and "big bang." It follows with a process for a district reform team to decide which approach is most appropriate when considering the experience of students and teachers in the building, labor contracts, relationships between the district and the community, and the capacity of the district and its partners to provide support to transforming schools.

The Incremental Approach: Growing the New Within the Old

New York City and Oakland, California, are growing new small schools in the corners of existing large schools; when the small schools reach capacity at all grade levels, they will supplant the large. In both cities, multiple schools are opening at once, and the large schools, while retaining some upper-grade students, are downsizing and will eventually be replaced. In schools that are transforming over a multi-year period, a building-wide principal manages the process, both to create a climate of support for the new small schools and to ensure that all students and teachers, including those in the downsized "host" school, feel they are in a viable learning environment. The principal plays a key role in managing the conversion process across the school and may take on the leadership of one of the new small schools.

The Incremental Approach



In this "incremental" approach, a school district transforms a large comprehensive high school into separate, autonomous small schools gradually, over a period of several years, without a dramatic closing of the existing school. For this approach to work, the district has to be clear from the beginning that the end goal is a campus of multiple, autonomous small schools—even though the process starts with the acceptance of a small freshman class for one (or preferably two) new small schools. These small schools add a grade per year, and the existing school downsizes as the small schools grow. The district may opt to maintain the downsized school as a small school or phase it out as the new small schools replace the existing school altogether.

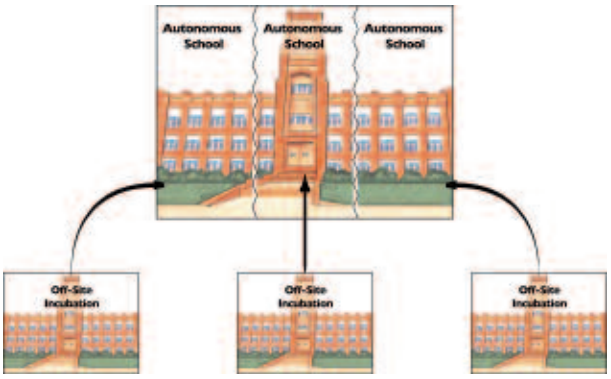
In this model, how staff are selected for the new small schools depends upon existing labor agreements. In some instances, teachers have retention rights within the building, and in some instances there is a balance of retention rights and the flexibility to hire from the outside.

The "Big Bang" Approach: Closing the Old to Make Room for the New

In 1993, the Julia Richman High School in New York City was phased out as a large, comprehensive high school and then re-opened with six schools that had been started off-site, making it one of the nation's longest-standing "shared" facilities. In this instance, the school department emptied the building and brought in new students and teachers. Today, the Julia Richman Campus houses four high schools, a middle school, and an elementary school, along with a day care center and a teen parent resource center.

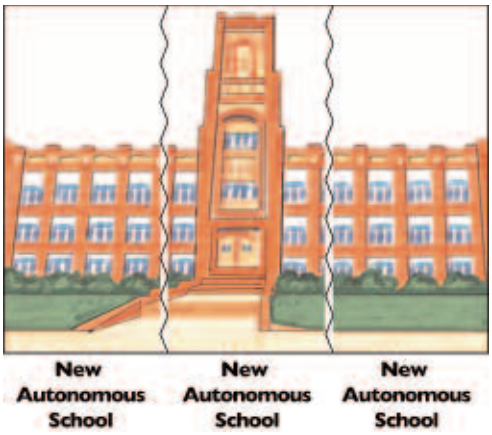
Boston has undertaken a combined approach: it has transformed two of a large school's existing small learning communities into autonomous small schools, while also moving a two-year-old successful small school, with charter-like autonomy conditions, into a third section of the building. Through negotiation with the Boston Teachers Union, current teachers in the building maintained their attachment rights to the building, but newly hired teachers have attachment rights only to the small school in which they teach.

The "Big Bang" Approach, Option #1



These districts opted to transform a high school in one move by closing it altogether and reopening it as an education "multiplex" housing multiple small high schools. Among the possibilities for this approach are: incubating small schools in separate facilities and then moving them into shared facilities; and shutting down an under-performing school and starting new small schools in its stead to serve the existing population of students.

The "Big Bang" Approach, Option #2



Here, as in the incremental approach, how staff are selected for the new small schools depends upon labor agreements, often reflecting a compromise between retention rights of teachers in the building and the ability of new schools to do some new hires. Because the shut-down and reopening of a high school eliminates the large school entirely, districts are finding it possible to use this "defining moment" to reconsider which administrative positions are necessary in a small school structure and to redefine key job descriptions of non-teaching personnel (e.g., assistant principal, department chair, and guidance counselor).

Directions: Your high school reform team involved should review the approaches described above, and then assess the conditions in your community in relation to each of the issues (ownership of the reform, student experience, labor impact and relations, community relations, and capacity-building).

Incremental Approach: Growing New Schools Within the Old			
Trade-Off to Consider	**Advantages**	**Drawbacks**	**Assessment: In our community...**
Ownership of Reform	Allows time to correct misconceptions about the reform and need for change, to share data on student outcomes prompting a change, and to engage in conversation and study groups about need for change	Takes longer to get a critical mass of faculty who are aligned with the new direction	
Student Experience	Current students allowed to finish program of study and graduate from their "old" school	Old and new students may experience an "us and them" situation	
Labor Impact and Relations	Fewer staff members impacted at one time; time for staff to make decisions about transferring or applying to stay; time to build relationship with teachers in the building and with the union and to collectively address contractual issues and avoid unnecessary grievances	More time for resistance to grow; "us vs. them" mentality can bifurcate the faculty	
Community Relations	Allows time to engage and organize community partners' involvement in the design of new small schools and to engage parents of prospective students	Doesn't deal with the sense of urgency some community members feel about dealing with the crisis in the school	
Capacity Building	Less taxing on organization providing support: capacity-building can occur over time	More challenging to make necessary changes in job descriptions, staff roles, and physical plant	

Big Bang Approach: Closing the Old to Make Room for the New			
Trade-Off to Consider	**Advantages**	**Drawbacks**	**Assessment: In our community...**
Ownership of Reform	Critical mass of staff who stay or are hired know that there will be fundamental changes	Little time to bring along more questioning/skeptical staff	
Student Experience	Every student is part of the change and in a new small school	Students who started before the change may not feel supportive of such dramatic reorganization; could have negative impact on entering students	
Labor Impact and Relations	Staff who remain may become more supportive of the change once they are experiencing benefits of smaller faculty with more professional interaction, smaller student load, etc.	Can lead to compromised relationships between district and union	
Community Relations	Gives community sense of movement, of addressing urgent situation	Less time to build community engagement and to organize	
Capacity Building	Sharply defined capacity-building tasks	Dramatic "moment" of change requires significant capacity-building in a short time	

TOOL 2.3

How "Flexibilities" Can Advance Teaching and Learning

Research indicates that successful small schools have flexibility over their resources, but flexibility alone is not sufficient: successful schools use their flexibility to create conditions for excellent teaching and learning. This tool can be used with a district reform team to consider potential "flexibility" that can be extended to new small schools, or with small school design teams to gather input on ways to use these flexibilities to support teaching and learning.

Directions: Review the list of flexibilities and examples of how they can be used. Discuss each flexibility and add any additional ways small schools might leverage or take advantage of the condition to advance teaching and learning and improve outcomes for young people.

Flexibility	What It Looks Like (Examples)
Hiring flexibility	Hiring staff whose expertise and interests align with school mission Creating job descriptions that differ from standard (i.e., new types of student support staff) *Other ways to take advantage of hiring flexibility to support teaching and learning:*
Budget flexibility	Using "lump sum budgeting" to determine staffing plan most appropriate for school "Buying back" district services or buying services from outside vendor *Other ways to take advantage of budget flexibility to support teaching and learning:*

Flexibility	What It Looks Like (Examples)
Governance autonomy	Creating a board of directors that hires the school principal and oversees all aspects of school governance *Other ways to take advantage of governance autonomy to support teaching and learning:*
Time flexibility (schedule, calendar)	Scheduling longer blocks for all/some courses Scheduling staff planning time/professional development through early release days *Other ways to take advantage of time flexibility to support teaching and learning:*
Curriculum flexibility	Creating courses other than district curriculum that meet college prep standards Designing curriculum sequence that includes students taking college courses in high school for their core curriculum *Other ways to take advantage of curriculum flexibility to support teaching and learning:*

TOOL 2.4

Strategies for Extending Flexibilities to Schools

Directions: Below are strategies for extending hiring, budget, governance, time, and curriculum flexibilities to schools: through the innovative use of existing policy, through policy waivers for specific new small schools, through new policy, through new union contracts, and through contract waivers. To complete the chart, consider each of the possible strategies for extending autonomies to new small schools. Then assess the advantages and disadvantages of pursuing the particular strategy in your district.

Innovative use of existing policy		
Conditions	**Advantages**	**Disadvantages**
Hiring Flexibility		
Budget Flexibility		
Governance Autonomy		
Time Flexibility (schedule, calendar)		
Curriculum Flexibility		

Negotiate policy waiver for specific new small schools		
Conditions	**Advantages**	**Disadvantages**
Hiring Flexibility		
Budget Flexibility		
Governance Autonomy		
Time Flexibility (schedule, calendar)		
Curriculum Flexibility		

Create new policy governing new small schools		
Conditions	**Advantages**	**Disadvantages**
Hiring Flexibility		
Budget Flexibility		
Governance Autonomy		
Time Flexibility (schedule, calendar)		
Curriculum Flexibility		

Negotiate new union contract		
Conditions	**Advantages**	**Disadvantages**
Hiring Flexibility		
Budget Flexibility		
Governance Autonomy		
Time Flexibility (schedule, calendar)		
Curriculum Flexibility		

Negotiate with union for contract waiver		
Conditions	**Advantages**	**Disadvantages**
Hiring Flexibility		
Budget Flexibility		
Governance Autonomy		
Time Flexibility (schedule, calendar)		
Curriculum Flexibility		

TOOL 2.5

Identifying Potential Schools for Replication

Directions: Check the boxes to indicate data that are currently available for the school under consideration for replication. Then examine all the available data to assess whether the school being considered is effective for the particular populations of students most in need of options, given your current portfolio of schools. You will need to gather as much data as is available on the student population and look across the multiple indicators of student success.

Student Population

I. Defining the population of students attending the school

Overall enrollment of students

☐ # of students enrolled

☐ # and % of students at each grade level

☐ Average age of students enrolled

☐ # and % of students receiving special education services

☐ # and % of students who are English language learners

Demographic and family characteristics

☐ # and % of students in each racial/ethnic group

☐ # and % of male and female students

☐ # and % of students whose family language is other than English

☐ # and % of students in low-income families

☐ # and % of students living in single-parent households

Life circumstances

☐ # and % of students who are pregnant and/or parenting

☐ # and % of students who are court involved

☐ # and % of students who are in foster care or living on their own

II. Past academic achievement of students

☐ # and % of students behind in credit attainment

☐ # and % of students one and two years overage for grade

☐ # and % of students retained in grade one or more times

☐ # and % of students entering the school with a "C", above a "C", or below a "C" in core academic subjects

☐ # and % of students reading at grade level, above grade level, and below grade level

Student Outcomes

I. Growth in academic achievement

☐ # and % of students gaining more than a year's literacy level in one year of instruction

☐ # and % of students earning additional credits

☐ # and % of students showing improvements in grades/GPA, and degree of growth

☐ # and % of students improving test scores

II. Acquisition of skills and dispositions required for postsecondary and career success.

Attainment of academic proficiency

☐ # and % of students earning credits for promotion to next grade level

☐ # and % of students meeting high school graduation requirements

☐ # and % of students demonstrating academic proficiency on state, district, and school assessments

☐ # and % of students achieving satisfactory grades (e.g., C or better) in core academic courses

☐ # and % of students who meet academic requirements for entry into the state's two-year and four-year college systems

☐ # and % of students who do not require remedial course work at postsecondary level (i.e., pass course placement tests)

Increased engagement in school

☐ # and % of students with high attendance rates as determined by district standards (by grade level)

☐ # and % of students who meet standards of behavior (e.g., who have no suspensions)

☐ # and % of students who enroll in more challenging, high-level courses

☐ # and % of students in extracurricular activities at school

Greater equity in achievement and engagement

☐ Rate of improvement in student achievement and engagement measures by race, native language, gender, socio-economic status, and disabled status

☐ Reduction of differences in student achievement and engagement by race, language group, gender, socio-economic status, and disabled status

TOOL 2.6

Assessing Suitability for Replication

Directions: Once a school is identified as a possible candidate for replication based on the data on a range of student outcomes, the four criteria and associated benchmarks identified below will help reform leaders assess the suitability of the model for replication within the district's portfolio of schools. Assess whether the school meets the various benchmarks for replication in each of the criteria categories, drawing on previous knowledge, available data and school documents, interviews with school leaders and staff, school observations, and other strategies as needed.

Criteria	Benchmarks	Assessment
Satisfies compelling need within the district	School/program satisfies an unmet or inadequately addressed programmatic need in the district (e.g., accelerating math literacy, arts, or other interest-based education) School/program serves a population of students that is currently not served or not sufficiently served (e.g., older students with few credits) School/program introduces an innovation that could enhance performance across the portfolio of schools (e.g., integrated math/science curriculum that prepares students for state assessment) School/program could serve as a vehicle to advance a particular reform agenda within the district (e.g., reenrolling dropouts in diploma granting program)	
Well-defined model	Design and operation of model are well-defined Features of the model responsible for success are well-identified Features of success are aligned with the core features critical to the district's reform strategy Core design and operating elements are specified enough to allow implementation by others in different contexts with similar results	

Criteria	Benchmarks	Assessment
Ease of Implementation	Processes/materials can be replicated and standardized to some degree Training necessary for staff to develop materials/pedagogy, etc. can be standardized Effective knowledge transfer process is available to facilitate training needs	
Sustainability	District can support the financial requirements of the school/program (e.g., per student cost) Funding streams exist to sustain the school/program District has necessary human resources (expertise, availability) to implement and sustain the school/program District has the facilities necessary to support the school/program's needs	

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Lili Allen, Cheryl Almeida, Lucretia Murphy, and Adria Steinberg are all members of JFF's *Connected by 25* team. The *Connected by 25* initiative is directed at improving options and outcomes for the large group of young people for whom the road to a productive adulthood is interrupted prematurely. Far too often, these young people cannot secure the postsecondary skills and credentials that are essential for citizenship, economic security, and productivity. Among African-American and Hispanic students, the numbers hovers around 50 percent, and in hundreds of large city high schools around the country more than half of the young people are not on track to graduation.

Lili Allen, Program Director, co-leads JFF's work as a core partner in the Boston Public Schools' district-wide high school renewal effort. She is conducting research on systemic approaches to addressing the learning needs of out-of-school youth and documenting district redesign in cities across the country.

Cheryl Almeida, Program Director, directs research for *Connected by 25*. She has 15 years experience as an education consultant on research, policy, professional development, and evaluation.

Lucretia Murphy, Senior Project Manager, focuses on the need for structural systemic change to increase postsecondary access and success for low-income youth. Dr. Murphy's dissertation, *The Evidence of Things Not Seen: The Biography of the College Choice Process for Inner-City Young Women from Metropolis*, examines the college-going process of youth who have been poorly served by public high schools.

Adria Steinberg, Associate Vice President, leads JFF's work on expanding and improving educational options and outcomes for struggling students and out-of-school youth. Ms. Steinberg has almost four decades of experience in the field of education as a teacher, administrator, researcher, and writer.

The Connected by 25 team members are authors or co-authors of numerous JFF publications addressing the systemic and policy changes necessary to prepare students who are not on track to graduation to complete high school and advance along pathways to postsecondary credentials. These include *The Dropout Crisis: Promising Approaches in Prevention and Recovery*, *From Large to Small: Strategies for Personalizing the High School*, *Four Building Blocks for a System of Educational Opportunity: Developing Pathways To and Through College for Urban Youth*, and *From the Prison Track to the College Track: Pathways to Postsecondary Opportunities for Out-of-School Youth.*